

Region 4 CAC Meeting Minutes March 4, 2008 Region 4 Headquarters Great Falls MT

FWP Staff – Graham Taylor, Fred Schultz, Mike Martin, George Liknes, Bruce Auchly, Andy Brummond, Tom Stivers, Gary Olson, Ken Farthing, Colin Maas and Matt Marcinek

CAC Members – Joe Schaffer, Mike Labriola, Jodie Butler, Fred Davison, Karl Gies, Doug Deffe', Robert Facklam, Dennis Hanson, Deanna Robbins, Rocky Harber and Charles Bocock

Public/Guests – Bryan Thies, Cascade; Don Pfau, Lewistown, Ron Moody, FWP Commissioner and Gary Bertellotti, Acting Chief of Operations.

General Topics for Discussion

- Graham introduced Gary Olson, Biologist at Conrad, who briefed the group on the Marias River State Park/Wildlife Management Area – Lincoln Property. Gary gave an overview of the property. Total deeded acres – 8,866. There is another 1840 acres accessible on the property – DNRC and BLM lands. Access will be through Larry McCormick property. We will be working on the access road this spring. 16.3 miles of the Marias River runs through the property. The property will be managed on a cooperative effort between Parks and Wildlife. Looking at opening the property up to the public on May 1, 2009. Propose that the site be park and walk – no motorized vehicles allowed. Looking at keeping the area primitive, natural and native.

Dennis H asked about taxes to the county. Taxes, as assessed by both Toole and Pondera Counties, will be paid by FWP.

Mike L. asked about the use of primitive weapons on the property and making it a primitive weapon area to keep the area primitive. We are still discussing the hunting season and the format to be used for weapons and access. Might be a drawing to get access but remember there is only a three-week general deer season in this hunting district.

Graham added some information on the area and passed out a map of property. This is a work in progress. Property will have its boundary lines surveyed shortly. Eventually we will develop an updated map that will have rules for use of the

property on the back of the map and this is how we intend to get information out to the public users.

Joe S. has been hearing about making this property a unique quality experience. This may cause limited opportunity for most folks and of course quality experience has different definitions for different folks.

After Gary Olson's briefing, folks in the room introduced themselves. After the introductions, Ron Moody new FWP Commissioner (District 3) introduced himself and explained how he intends to operate as a Commissioner. Says he plans to attend CAC meetings statewide but will concentrate on meetings within his district. He discussed the purpose of the CAC and asked members to express why they joined the CAC. He said if the CAC could come to a consensus on a topic it is very important in that it would carry more weight to the FWP Commissioners on making their decisions.

- George Liknes and Andy Brummond discussed the process of stream permitting, water rights and habitat protection with a detailed power-point presentation. Andy gave a short briefing on historical water rights of the Department. FWP has no water right enforcement authority. We deal with water users but actually DNRC lists water rights, water courts then define water rights. District Court enforces water rights. Than George discussed stream permitting. This is also the responsibility of DNRC. Virtually every activity on or near a stream needs at least stream permit or maybe more. Permits are required to keep streams as natural as possible. These water related issues were discussed in light of some confusion and current understanding of FWP's role in streamside permitting processes. Discussion ensued ref: how private landowners can comply with and better understand stream permitting decisions.
- **Fred Davison** was asked to update us on House Joint Resolution 15, which is a bill requesting an interim study to evaluate funding sources for a monetary incentive program to encourage and compensate private landowners who grant public access to their property for recreational uses. Fred described this as being an educational tool to connect rural and suburban lifestyles. There are actually more dollars out there – non-hunting/fishing, than probably hunting and fishing funds. Can we as a CAC send a letter of support? **Joe** asked if Fred could draft a resolution from our CAC in support of the bill.
- **Gary Bertellotti**, Acting Chief of Operations, gave an overview of legislation affecting FWP. Passed out a packet on legislative members and list of bills that affect FWP. Numerous bills were discussed and listed below is some of the discussion on certain bills:

SB 185 – addresses bring back relatives/fulltime students to be able to hunt and fish in Montana

HB 585 – Any family member can sponsor a nonresident relative to hunt in Montana. Promote hunting recruitment and economic input to the state.

HB 74 – authorizes archery season for mountain lion, bears, wolves
 HB 253 – would have given management of buffalo from Dept of Agriculture to FWP but bill failed.
 HB 468 – allowed hunter education taught in schools but it was tabled.
 SB's 13, 14, 16 were all tabled and are bills that affected Ft Peck Hatchery. A new bill was drafted, SB 425 – this bill will sunset warm water stamp in 2012 and keeps the facility focused on warm water fish but cold water fish can also be raised there.
 SB 217 is a bill with a 18 million \$ fiscal note to FWP.
 SB470 – revises 7 year wait for bighorn sheep if you did not get one in an unlimited area
 HB 190 – bridge access to streams – can be fenced up to the bridge but access must be provided
 Bill that would have had folks opt in rather than out for fee on vehicles for Parks use died

CAC Member Discussion Items:

- ❖ **Doug D.** asked about statistics for changing to permits for archery in the breaks areas. Did it work and get the results that FWP wanted? Graham passed out a chart that tracked drawing results last year. Only one or two areas were a problem for everyone drawing a permit. This year a lot of areas will go to 75% of last year's quotas, which should affect more archers. See attached figures reflecting 2008 drawing results and 2009 anticipated permit numbers.
- ❖ **Mike L.** said he had received several comments from fishermen that there is a rumor going around that bait fishermen were catching 50 fish a day on egg sacks. His fear is that if fish are released there may be a lot of mortality. He would like to recommend bait fishermen be required to use circle hooks which would cut down on mortality of fish as the circle hooks work well for fish being caught in the lip. George L. our fisheries manager said he is hearing just the opposite of folks catching fish – it has been really slow.
- ❖ **Robert F.** thanked the staff for the briefing on water rights and permitting process on the Deep Creek ranch.
- ❖ **Dennis H.** brought several topics up that folks had talked to him about in the Chester area. He wanted to know why Tiber Reservoir couldn't be stocked with walleyes like other lakes in the area? There is a lot of interest in stocking the lake and increasing the fishery if stocking would help. George L. stated that we shouldn't need to stock walleyes in Tiber – real problem exists as if there is adequate forage fish to maintain present population in Tiber. Would be nice to have Dave Yerk give a briefing at our next CAC or to groups up in the Chester and high line area. Also folks want to know why there are not more antelope permits in 400/401 HD's. Hill County right next door has 600 plus permits. Right now we are being overrun with antelope. Graham said the great number of antelope there now could be from a Canadian migration of antelope in the winter months that occurs time to time. Folks in the area are happy with the 3-Week deer season and want it to continue it. Also heard favorable comments on the

archery seasons in the breaks. Also asked for help with getting someone in the Marina on Tiber. This would be a Bureau of Reclamation lease not FWP. Also stated that fisherman didn't do well ice fishing for walleyes this year on Tiber. Don't know if it was the high water or what.

- ❖ **Jodie B.** – We had the largest grass fire in the state so far this year – 20,000 plus acres burned in the Carter area. I personally opposed HB382 – Families in the Field's bill – hunter safety issues. I haven't heard any complaints how the archery permit season went last year. I support the use of primitive weapons on the Lincoln property. Something to look at.
- ❖ **Charles B.** – Has a concern with pine bark beetle in trees that have been cut down and now are stacked up just on the other side of the railroad tracks from our Park. If these trees aren't destroyed soon these beetles could spread to healthy trees. Matt said Parks is working with the city to spray trees to kill the beetles. After spraying next step is to cut trees down. Trees that have been cut are scheduled to be destroyed real soon.

NEXT MEETING: Let's look at possibly planning a trip up to the Marias River State Park/WMA – tour property and maybe have a meeting in Shelby. Looking at mid-May. Will survey folks in April to finalize the date.

Attachments – Archery Elk Stats